DRAFT v1
Subject to change. Full syllabus available in Canvas January 13, 2027.

Loyola Institute for Ministry
Loyola University New Orleans

Christian Origins
LIM-G712-Y1G0E

Spring 2027

Instructor: Deborah Wilhelm, D. Min.
Email: dwilhelm@loyno.edu

Office Hours: By appointment, email me to set up a meeting

Important! You will be notified by email when your course is available (normally the week before class begins). Please check your *Loyola Gmail* account for instructions. ***Please reply*** to the instructor's email when you receive it.

Course Description

This course introduces students to the literature, history, and theology of the early Christian scriptures commonly known as the New Testament. It examines the historical context of Jesus' teachings, his parables and preaching of the "Reign of God," and the theology of Paul and the Gospels. Particular attention is given to the experience of faith that was engendered by Jesus among his first disciples and the lived faith of the earliest Christians.

Course Goals and Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to

- understand a variety of methods and models used to study the New Testament (NT), with special attention to the principles of Catholic biblical interpretation and to Catholic understanding of the relationships between the Old Testament and the New Testament.
- acquire a familiarity with the social, historical, and religious contexts of Jesus, of the early Christian community, and of the NT scriptures, both in the life and scriptures of the Jewish people and in the Greco-Roman world.
- understand and appreciate the nature of the NT writings—especially the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the major Pauline letters, and the Book of Revelation—from several perspectives: literary (each book as a whole, as well as specific literary forms); historical (the development of each book and of the canon); religious and theological (the various books' expression of who Jesus is and what he did, how Christians experience Jesus, and what faith in Jesus requires).

- discern the meanings of the NT writings for their own lives and ministerial contexts, especially with respect to Catholic/Christian ministry.

Expected Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to

- read and interpret the NT writings critically—that is, with a greater ability to discern their variety of meanings in the past and present.
- use the tools needed for further study of and reflection on the NT.
- apply the faith perspectives of the NT to their lives and ministries, by reflecting on the NT scriptures, on their own experience of Jesus, and on the meaning of both in their own contexts.

Required Readings

Please order the required texts as soon as possible from the bookstore of your choice.

The Catholic Study Bible. 3rd edition, edited by Donald Senior and John J. Collins, Oxford UP, 2016. ISBN-13: 978-0-19-02672-30 (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-0-19-93627-76 (hardcover).

This study Bible contains the translation of the Bible (New American Bible Revised Edition or NABRE) we will be using as well as essays that will be assigned as reading and that may be used for completing course assignments. Unless otherwise noted for a particular assignment, no other Bible is acceptable for use in class.

Failure to adhere to this policy will negatively affect your grade.

Harrington, Daniel J. *Jesus: A Historical Portrait*. Franciscan Media, 2007. ISBN-13: 978-0-86716-833-4 (paperback), list price: $13.99. Retail price may vary. (You may read this book online at the Internet Archive after setting up a free account.)

Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*. 3rd edition, Fortress Press, 2010. ISBN-13: 978-0-8006-6361-2, $29.00-$55.00 (retail price may vary). Please note that this is the ***third edition*** of this book; be sure to order it using the correct ISBN.

Additional readings and media as included in the Canvas course.

Evaluation and Course Requirements

Sequence of Topics/Calendar of Assignments

Weekly sessions in this course run from Tuesday–Monday. Please note that all assignments must be completed by Midnight on Monday, the last day of the weekly session, except for Week 1; you must complete your personal introduction by Sunday, 1/24 by 11:59 pm Central Time, or risk being administratively dropped from the course and your discussion questions by Monday, 1/25, by 11:59 pm Central Time.

Session	Topic	Assignments
Week 1 1/18 – 1/25	Introduction to Christian Origins (1/18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Holiday)	Introduce self, complete readings, media, discussion question
Week 2 1/26 – 2/1	Interpreting the New Testament in its Contexts	Complete readings, media, discussion questions
Week 3 2/2 – 2/8	Paul within the Early Christian Mission	Readings, audios, discussion question; complete Small-Group Discussion Schedule Survey
Week 4 2/9 – 2/15	Mardi Gras Holiday	
Week 5 2/16 – 2/22	Pauline Theology	Complete readings, media, discussion question; Optional Synchronous Class Meeting
Week 6 2/23 – 3/1	Jesus' Words and Deeds: The Reign of God Proclaimed	Complete readings, media, discussion questions; begin drafting paper on Paul; complete prayer journal #1
Week 7 3/2 – 3/8	The Crucified and Risen Jesus Proclaimed as Lord	Complete readings, media, discussion questions; meet with small group; complete small group journal #1
Week 8 3/9 – 3/15	The Gospel of Mark	Complete readings, media, discussion questions; submit paper on Paul
Week 9 3/16 – 3/22	The Gospel of Matthew	Complete readings, media, discussion questions; complete Small-Group Discussion Schedule Survey; Optional Synchronous Class Meeting
Week 10 3/23 – 3/29	Holy Week and Easter Holiday (no class)	
Week 11 3/30 – 4/5	The Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles	Complete readings, media, discussion questions; meet with small group; complete small group journal #2
Week 12	The Gospel of John	Complete readings, media, discussion

4/6 – 4/12		questions
Week 13 4/13 – 4/19	Revelation and Selected Letters	Complete readings, media, discussion question; begin drafting exegesis paper
Week 14 4/20 – 4/26	Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity	Complete readings, media, discussion question; complete prayer journal #2; Optional Synchronous Class Meeting
Week 15 4/27 – 5/3	Concluding Reflections	Complete readings, media
Week 16 5/4 – 5/10	Course Closing	Submit exegesis paper

Tuesday, 5/18, Due date to post grades

Week One Assignments

1) Complete Week 1 module in Canvas
2) Participate in Discussions on Canvas:
   - Introduce oneself and greet one's fellow students (due Sun., 1/24, by 11;59 pm CT)
3) Read:
   - Catholic Study Bible vs. New American Bible (PDF file in Canvas)
   - Catholic Study Bible (CSB) Reading Guide (RG):
     - "Abbreviations of the Books of the Bible," RG xv
     - "Key to References," RG xvii
     - "General Introduction," RG 3-9
     - "Using the Catholic Study Bible," RG 15-17
     - "The Bible in Catholic Life," RG 19-32
     - "Biblical History and Archaeology: New Testament," RG 57-71
     - "Catholic Interpretation of the Bible," RG 82-87 "Biblical Translation and Pastoral Interpretation," RG 88-99
     - "The Bible in the Lectionary," RG 100-108
   - Gnuse, Robert K., et al., *The Jewish Roots of Christian Faith*, chapter 1. This is the first chapter of the course book from the LIM Old Testament course LIM-G711 Jewish Roots of Christian Faith. Most of what this chapter says about interpreting the Bible applies also to this New Testament course. If you are new to LIM, please pay particular attention to pp. 8-12 and p. 17. (This optional, but recommended. Text is available in Canvas.)

Assessment

Each student's final grade will include the following parts:

		Percentage of Grade	
		Graduate	CEU
1	Substantive participation in weekly discussion via online postings	45%	90%

2	Midterm Assignment, 4-5 page paper	15%	–
3	Final Assignment, 10-12 page paper	30%	–
4	Spiritual Formation Journals	10%	10%

1) Substantive participation in weekly discussion via online postings (45% graduate; 90% CEU)

Please note that credit for the course for certificate (CEU) level students is based in large part on participation in each session's discussion board. If you are a CEU student, this participation is 90% of your grade for credit. (The additional 10% comes from the spiritual formation component of the course.)

Each week you will be able to earn 2 points for each Discussion Board question. For each weekly discussion, your participation includes your original post in response to the assigned question(s), as well as the comments you are asked to make on your colleagues' posts. There are specific directions posted about these requirements each week in Canvas. Postings should address the question(s) for the session, respect the word limit posted for each week's question(s) and demonstrate some interaction with course materials for that session.

In addition to addressing the question(s) for each week, you are also asked each week to comment on the postings of your colleagues in this course. This comment should also be substantive; "I agree" or "I like what you posted" is not a substantive comment. Please articulate what about a posting is compelling to you, and why you consider their comment relevant, challenging, important, etc. There is no word limit requirement to comment posts.

Asking Questions: One of the most effective tools of a good online discussion is the question. Communication in the online medium can be easily misinterpreted; conversely, it can be challenging to effectively convey tone and nuance in an online discussion. This can lead to misunderstanding, conflict, and frustration in the learning group.

When in doubt about the meaning of a posting, a good strategy is to pose a question about it, and to avoid making assumptions or jumping to conclusions. Even if the meaning seems straight- forward, it is good practice to ask follow-up questions and/or questions for clarification. My hope for our discussions is that we will rely on the question as a standard tool for effective communication.

Discussion Leaders: Each week there will be one or two Discussion Leaders to help initiate the flow of our conversation. The task of the Discussion Leader is simply to post first. He or she will essentially begin the conversation around the given question(s) for the week by posting their response to the session question by Wednesday at 8pm Central of each week. Others will then be able to respond to this initial posting and engage in a thread. All subsequent postings in the conversation, both for the Discussion Leader and the rest of the

class will be due the following Monday at 12 Noon Central. Each week's session will follow this general format.

I will plan for and post a schedule of Discussion Leaders for several weeks ahead of time. Be sure to check the Discussion Leaders link on the course homepage to see when your name will come up. If you are unable to lead the week you are scheduled, please let me know as soon as possible.
In weeks when you participate in Small Group Meetings, you will submit a journal entry of 300+ words in place of participation on the Discussion Board.

Discussion Board Posting Schedule (Please note: All times are U.S. Central)

Beginning at noon on Monday

Read the overview for the week's work and begin individual work ("Read" and "Watch" assignments) for this session. Questions that arise about the material may be addressed to the instructor on the Question Board.

Before Wednesday 8:00 p.m.

Post response to the mini-course on hermeneutics assignment on the Discussion Board. This initial post should be between 300-500 words.

Before Thursday 8:00 p.m.

Post responses to each other's hermeneutics posts, establishing a discussion that will proceed through the week's end.

Beyond the initial post due Wednesday, each student should have at least two postings that respond to others, the first of which is due by Thursday night, and each of which should be between 150-300 words. Your posts should raise a question for the person to whom you are responding, or to the group in general. There is no word limit for any posts you contribute beyond these two required posts.

Before Friday 8:00 p.m.

Post response to ***Test Through Discussion (TTD)*** assignment.

Before Saturday 8:00 p.m.

Post responses to each other's TTD posts on the Discussion Board, establishing a discussion that will proceed through the weekend.

Beyond the initial TTD post due Friday, each student should have at least two postings that respond to others, the first of which is due by Saturday night, and each of which

should be between 150-300 words. One of your posts should raise a question to the person you are responding to, or to the group in general. There is no word limit for any posts you contribute beyond these two required posts.

Before noon Monday

As we begin a new week, any further issues you think still need to be raised in relation to the previous week's work can be shared through either the Question Board or the Student Lounge depending on to whom you're primarily addressing the issue, the instructor or members of the group.

2) Midterm Assignment (15% graduate; not required for CEU)

This is a paper of 4-6 pages in length based upon Paul and his theology.

3) Final Assignment (30% graduate; not required for CEU)

The final assignment will be a research paper of 10-12 pages you will develop over the course of several weeks.

4) Spiritual Formation (10% graduate; 10% CEU)

This course's spiritual formation includes weekly prayer and two journal entries in which you reflect on your experience in the form of a 300-500 word posting.

Grading Scale

A	93-100	**B-**	80-82.9	**D+**	67-69.9
A-	90-92.9	**C+**	77-79.9	**D**	60-66.9
B+	87-89.9	**C**	73-76.9	**F**	0-59.9
B	83-86.9	**C-**	70-72.9		

Overall Grading Scale

Please note that the LIM grading scale uses B as the standard for graduate-quality work. A and B+ indicate graduate work done with distinction, with B- and below signifying levels below graduate standards.

Letter Grade	Quality Points	Characteristics of Student Work
A	**4.0**	Work done with distinction. An outstanding use of all four evaluation criteria as a catalyst for critical reflection.
A-	**3.7**	Work done with distinction, with a few minor corrections needed.

B+	**3.3**	Work of very good quality. The assignment is addressed in an exceptional manner with a good balance of personal insight and academic documentation.
B	**3.0**	The standard for the master's degree. The assignment is adequately addressed in a clear and concise manner with appropriate documentation. If subsequent work meets this standard of quality, the degree will be awarded.
B-	**2.7**	The work is slightly below the standard for master's level work. The assignment is addressed, but a number of corrections is needed to address the assignment in a clear and concise manner. If subsequent work continues at this level, the student may not continue in the degree program.
C+	**2.3**	Substandard graduate work. Evaluation criteria are not adequately met in the assignment. Moderate improvement is needed. If subsequent work continues at this level, the student may not continue in the degree program.
C	**2**	Less than graduate-level work. Evaluation criteria are not met. If subsequent work continues at this level, the student may not continue in the degree program.
C-	**1.7**	Below average, grade does not count towards graduation.
D+	**1.3**	Minimally passing, grade does not count towards graduation.
D	**1**	Minimally passing, grade does not count towards graduation.
F	**0**	Assignment not addressed at all, incomplete assignment, or not submitted on time.

Course Policies

Incomplete Grade Policy

Students are subject to the university policy regarding incomplete grades with the following additions to university policy. Grades of Incomplete are given at the instructor's discretion. Students must complete LIM's Incomplete Grade Request Form found in the Resources » Policies, Forms, & Services section of their Canvas course. Students should first inquire of their instructor whether or not they are eligible for an incomplete; this must occur with sufficient time to complete the process explained here. To be eligible, students may not have received an Incomplete in the previous semester, must have completed at least 75% of the course work to date, and must have at least a C or above in the course. After the instructor makes an initial assessment of eligibility, including checking with the LIM Office to ensure there was no Incomplete in the previous semester and finds the student eligible, by the due date of the course's final assignment, a student must complete and obtain all signatures for LIM's Incomplete Grade Request Form found in the Resources section of their Canvas course and submit it to their instructor, who will forward a copy to the LIM Director. LIM graduate students may not receive Incompletes in LIM courses in consecutive semesters.

Attendance & Participation

Students are subject to the university policy regarding attendance found online in the Bulletin. Students in online courses communicate their presence by active participation in weekly discussions. Each course's instructor sets requirements for how many times students must post on the Discussion Board in Canvas. Failing to post during the first week of class may result in removal from the course. If you foresee that you will be unable to post in a

given week, please contact the instructor ahead of time. Extensions for posting are given at the instructor's discretion and for a valid reason may be granted if arranged ahead of time. In extraordinary circumstances, students may arrange with their instructor to post up to two weeks after a deadline, though this may entail a grade reduction. Posts and other assignments submitted more than two weeks late may be subject to a grade of zero. If students do not post in a given week, they are considered absent. Absence for more than one week without contacting the instructor may result in removal from and failure of the course.

University Policies

Please read Part 2 of the syllabus (located on LORA and in Canvas) for university policies on plagiarism, AI, accessible education, and more.